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DEC 28 2006

Docket No. F-6485

Ser. No. 09/509,808

REMARKS

The amendment of claim 24 to change "low" to "reduced" is supported, for example, on page 6, lines 1-15, of the specification.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

On pages 2 and 3 of the Office Action claims 24-28, 30 and 31 are again separately rejected under 35 U.S. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto patents, U.S. 5,485,685 or 5,784,805 which have similar disclosures. The rejections are substantially identical to those made in the previous Office Action of October 7, 2005.

Arguments against the rejections were made in the previous amendment mailed April 7, 2006 on pages 8-10 of the Remarks, and such arguments were addressed in the "Response to Arguments" section on pages 5 and 6 of the present Office Action. The points raised in this section were all raised in previous Office Actions, particularly that the process limitations in the claims do not impart any patentability to the rejected product claims over the disclosures of the cited Hashimoto patents. This position is based on the assumption that the products

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covered in the rejected claims do not have any features which patentably distinguish them over the products of the Hashimoto patents.

It is submitted that the record shows several differences and unobvious advantages of the presently claimed product when compared with the product disclosed in the Hashimoto patents. Most importantly, the presently claimed product resulting from the action of laser light contains areas of a solidified melt including cellulose and hemicellulose as well as lignin, such that in these areas, the cellular structure of cellulose is completely obliterated. In comparison, the treatment of wood by a vapor defatting chlorine base organic solvent described in the Hashimoto patents merely removes the lignin and oil and fat content of the wood while leaving its cell structure intact, although perforated to facilitate the removal of water. This is an immediately apparent and unobvious difference between the structure of the presently claimed product and that disclosed in the Hashimoto patents.

As a result of the above-described difference of the products, a person having ordinary skill in the art would inevitably conclude that the solidified melt areas of the presently claimed wood product has a reduced degree of polymerization and increased plasticization as compared with the original state of

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the wood, and as recited in the claims. This is entirely unlike the product of Hashimoto in which the maintained structure of the cellulosic wood cells would preclude any reduced degree of polymerization or increased plasticization.

Finally, the above described unique structure and properties of the presently claimed properties enables the advantages of use described in the paragraph bridging pages 7 and 8 of the substitute specification.

It is believed, therefore, that in view of the above described unobvious differences in the structures, properties and use advantages of the presently claimed product as compared with that disclosed in the Hashimoto patents, there is nothing in these disclosures which would lead a person having ordinary skill in the art to arrive at such claimed product.

This application is now thought to be in condition for allowance and such action at an early date is earnestly solicited.

Applicant respectfully requests a three month extension of time for responding to the Office Action. The fee of \$1,020.00 for the extension is

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provided for in the charge authorization presented in the PTO Form 2038, Credit Card Payment form, provided herewith.

If there is any discrepancy between the fee(s) due and the fee payment authorized in the Credit Card Payment Form PTO-2038 or the Form PTO-2038 is missing or fee payment via the Form PTO-2038 cannot be processed, the USPTO is hereby authorized to charge any fee(s) or fee(s) deficiency or credit any excess payment to Deposit Account No. 10-1250.

Respectfully submitted,

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